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CUBA

The Castro regime followed up its victory last week by rounding up all suspected "counterrevolutionaries" in Cuba. Unconfirmed reports received by the Swiss Embassy in Havana state that the Cuban Government has arrested about 20,000 persons.

[redacted] authorities in Camaguey Province alone had seized 5,000 people, including 43 priests. There are also indications that the government is conducting a vigorous purge of its own administrative machinery to rid itself of elements which might turn against it in any new insurgent offensive.

[redacted] such a purge was nearing completion in the Santiago office of the G-2 organization.

[redacted] Cuban G-2 headquarters circular of the same date ordered subordinate units throughout Cuba to organize counterintelligence operations among anti-Castro prisoners by infiltrating G-2 agents posing as prisoners among them. Government interrogators were also encouraged to recruit informers from among the prisoners themselves by "employing varied means, such as promises of freedom to the guilty and patriotic arguments with the less mean prisoners."

Tension remains high in Havana and elsewhere in Cuba. The Swiss Embassy reported on 22 April that a large part of the populace in Havana was armed and in a fanatical mood.

[redacted]

Fidel Castro's comments on 23 April on "US backing" of the insurgents were rather mild in comparison with earlier harangues delivered following relatively minor incidents. He threatened, however, that any future "direct US aggression" against Cuba would unleash a "conflagration of incalculable proportions," and he implied that the lives of US citizens in Cuba and elsewhere in Latin America would be in danger if Cuba were again invaded. He also implied that the prisoners captured in the recent fighting--1,087, according to the regime--would be executed unless the US halted all aid to anti-Castro elements.

The government is proceeding with plans to stage elaborate victory celebrations on May Day in Havana and Santiago. Observers from bloc countries and representatives of pro-Castro groups throughout the hemisphere are expected to attend. Government leaders have promised that the May Day events will constitute Cuba's reply to the US State Department's recent "white paper" on Cuba. Jesus Soto, leader of the government-controlled Cuban labor confederation, said on 24 April that Cuba on 1 May would be proclaimed "the first socialist democratic republic in America," according to a French press agency dispatch from Havana. Soto reportedly added that such a proclamation could not have been made a year ago because of "reaction and divisionism" in Cuban labor unions, but that today "power is in the hands of the workers and peasants."

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At the UN

The General Assembly on 21 April approved the seven-power Latin American resolution on Cuban charges of US aggression after eliminating the key operative paragraph exhorting OAS members to assist in achieving a peaceful settlement. The resolution as passed calls on all UN members to take such peaceful action as is open to them to remove the existing tension. The Mexican draft resolution interdicting any aid to "promote the civil war in Cuba" was rejected for lack of a two-thirds majority.

Latin American Reactions

Repercussions of the landings in Cuba continue throughout Latin America. Castro sympathizers--primarily Communists and pro-Communists--have staged new demonstrations in several countries, although of a generally milder nature and with fewer participants than those immediately following the landings. Some of the demonstrations have been broken up by anti-Castro groups, as occurred in Pernambuco, Brazil, on 22 April; others, such as one attempted in Bogota on the same day, have been prevented by local security forces.

Initial Latin American reaction to President Kennedy's address of 20 April to the American Society of Newspaper Editors has been very favorable. Official comment--and in some cases that of a majority of the local newspapers--in Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru has hailed the message and has expressed support for early multilateral action to meet the Communist threat in Cuba.

The Brazilian foreign minister attempted to explain

President Quadros' equivocal attitude on Cuba by emphasizing Quadros' dependence on public support for the stringent domestic financial measures he has planned. The foreign minister, speaking informally, suggested that the best solution for the problem of Brazil's position on Cuba would be for the Brazilian President to meet with President Kennedy.

Costa Rican President Echandi instructed his representative at the Organization of American States (OAS) to offer a resolution proposing asylum in the Latin American countries for the political prisoners in Cuban jails. President Lleras of Colombia agreed to back the proposal following a telephone conversation with Echandi.

While such a resolution probably would have widespread support among most OAS members, it would probably be rejected by Castro, who consistently has attacked the OAS as a "tool of US imperialism."

Echandi and Panamanian President Chiari, who is motivated primarily by a desire to defend his own government against pro-Castro forces agitating for a revolution in Panama, agreed in a meeting on 22 April that their countries' diplomatic missions in Havana should be kept open as a refuge for those fleeing persecution.

On 24 April the Honduran Government of President Villeda Morales--who faces perhaps the most active pro-Castro forces in Central America but is personally a strong anti-Communist of the liberal left--became the eighth Latin American regime to break or suspend diplomatic relations with Cuba.

The strongly anti-Castro Ydigoras government of Guatemala

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was subjected to radio attack on 19 April by former President Arbenz--now an exile in Havana--and to Communist-led pro-Castro demonstrations on 18 and 19 April which led to three deaths and a number of wounded.

In Mexico, the administration of President Lopez Mateos appears intent on emphasizing its continued support of the aspirations of the Cuban revolution, apparently believing that if the Cubans are left alone they will eliminate Castro and Communist influence. In view of Lopez' statements to this effect, however, radical student agitators reportedly cannot understand why he has dispersed the sizable pro-Castro demonstrations organized by the students.

Bloc Reactions

Moscow has depicted the failure of the Cuban invasion as a major blow to US prestige but has warned that the Cuban situation is still dangerous. In a second letter to President Kennedy on 22 April, Khrushchev sought to establish the impression that the strong position taken by the USSR was a key factor in turning back the rebel effort to overthrow the Castro regime.

As in his previous letter and the Soviet Government statement of 18 April, Khrushchev carefully avoided committing the USSR to any specific measures in support of the Castro regime. He repeated his earlier warning, however, that "things cannot be done in such a way that in one region the situation is made easier and the conflagration dampened, and in another area a new conflagration is started." This warning is calculated to warn that the USSR will retaliate against US moves in Cuba by applying pressure on Western positions in other parts of the world that are more vulnerable to Communist power.

Khrushchev's reference to the US presence at the Guantanamo base "against the clearly expressed wish of the Cuban people and government" apparently was intended to serve notice that the USSR would strongly support any Cuban demand that the US relinquish this base.

Soviet propaganda has continued to develop the thesis of US responsibility for the attack on Cuba, stating that the interrogation of rebel prisoners confirms the US role in training and equipping the invading force. Several bloc commentators have observed that recent events in Cuba prove the correctness of the assessment of the Moscow conference last November that the imperialist "export of counterrevolution" is a primary source of world conflict but that the socialist countries are strong enough to rebuff the imperialists.

Chief Soviet delegate Zorin declared at a news conference at the UN on 26 April that the USSR was prepared to come to the aid of Cuba if it is attacked. In reply to a question Zorin said that the Soviet offer to "extend assistance" to Cuba was given more seriously than the British pledge of help to Poland prior to World War II. Zorin's remarks do not go beyond earlier Soviet statements of support. The Soviet leaders probably feel nevertheless that, with the failure of the rebel landings, they can now comment more freely.

Western European Reaction

While press and official opinion in Western Europe has shown very little sympathy for the Castro regime and considerable understanding of the US position in regard to it, the consensus is that the failure of the rebel movement to overthrow Castro is a serious blow to US prestige. West German

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Foreign Ministry officials have expressed concern to the US Embassy in Bonn that Castro's enhanced prestige will strengthen pro-Castro groups in other Latin American countries, and French officials have told the US ambassador in Paris that the US should have used "all necessary measures" to follow through on the plan to oust Castro. The Austrian Government rejected a Soviet request that it issue a statement condemning "US intervention" in Cuba, replying that it accepted President Kennedy's statement that the US did not intervene.

A senior official of the British Foreign Office told a US Embassy representative on 24 April that London is sympathetic with the US in its problem over Castro and believes that his eradication would be desirable. He believes that last week's events are likely to make Khrushchev all the more cocky and probably harder to deal with on other questions. He added that the reaction in Latin America, according to British reports, had been "rather better than one might have expected," and said he "had been impressed" by Canadian Prime Minister Diefenbaker's statement to Parliament condemning Castro.

Asian-African Reaction

The Arab world reacted with almost universal condemnation of the Cuban invasion, and its collapse has been hailed in the press and among the general public of many countries of the area as a victory over American "imperialism." The UAR's propaganda media have been unrestrained in denouncing the invasion as American aggression, comparing it to the tripartite action during the Suez crisis, and have liberally salted their criticism with vicious personal attacks on President Kennedy. In Iraq,

anti-Communist and anti-Qasim elements who equate Castro with Qasim feel that the Cuban failure has had a drastic effect on US prestige.

Ghanaian President Nkrumah and Guinean President Touré sent congratulatory messages to Castro following the latter's victory over the insurgents, and press coverage of the Cuban invasion has been heavily slanted against the US in both countries.

Southeast Asian comment on the collapse of the anti-Castro invasion has included official statements of "concern" from some government leaders. Press coverage has ranged from non-committal factual reporting to strong criticism of the US. The press in Thailand and the Philippines, however, has solidly backed the anti-Castro revolutionaries. Japanese government officials have privately expressed sympathy for the anti-Castro cause, but Foreign Minister Kosaka stated that Japan considers the Castro regime the legitimate government of Cuba.

Indonesian reaction was relatively restrained, probably because of President Sukarno's visit to Washington. The Indian press continues critical of the US role in the Cuban episode, but the US Embassy comments that public reaction has been surprisingly mild in comparison with that which followed the Lebanese landings.

In South Vietnam, the head of the security service is reported very discouraged by the failure of the landings, saying he did not see how either Laos or South Vietnam could hope to obtain strong support from the US if that country could do nothing to change the situation in Cuba, which is much closer. Similar reactions were observed in Greece and Iran.